

# Sisters rider jumps into competition at High Desert Classic

By Jim Cornelius  
News Editor

Some of the finest equestrians in North America head to Bend each year in July to compete in the High Desert Classic — a fundraiser for the programs of J Bar J Youth Ranch.

Among them this year was 13-year-old Sisters rider Alessandra Wentworth, riding her 10-year-old thoroughbred Making Change, better known as Penny. They had a very successful run, gathering ribbons with finishes in second, fourth, fifth and sixth places in various events during the first weekend of competition in the two-weekend event.

The pair jumped obstacles at a height of two feet seven inches.

“We started low and built up through the week,” Wentworth said.

Big barns from all over the West and Canada come to Bend for the event, bringing riders at all levels, from riders in their first event to some of the most elite competitors in the sport of hunter/jumper competition.

Wentworth — the

daughter of Jeanne and David Wentworth of Sisters — rides for JGW Ranch in Tumalo, under the coaching of trainer Cindy Shonka. She’s owned Penny for about a year, and the horse and rider have formed a bond.

“I have really found that it’s easy to connect with my horse,” she said. “You have to know how to ride her. I’ve never ridden a horse like her before.”

The horse has smarts and energy.

“We were building up to that show with all my other shows,” she said. “She was a lot more experienced than we’d expected.”

There is nothing quite like the sensation of soaring over a series of obstacles in partnership with a horse.

“I love to jump,” Wentworth said. “You can kind of move for the horse and with the horse... If you do it right, it feels like you’re flying, honestly.”

Being deeply involved with horses is not all glamorous events and soaring sensations. It’s a LOT of work



PHOTO PROVIDED

Alessandra Wentworth and Penny have formed a strong bond that helps them soar together over jumps in competition.

— and Alessandra puts in her share. She’s at the barn all day on most summer days, and she’s taking care of a Clydesdale to earn money to help keep her in the game. The horses keep her very busy — too busy to pursue other passions.

“I love music and art, but I haven’t had much time to do them myself,” she said.

Wentworth’s future definitely includes work with horses — she’s interested in

becoming an equine chiropractor. In the more immediate future, she’s already getting back, honing her skills — and preparing for next year’s High Desert Classic.

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